

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 051791

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S E C R E T STATE 051791

EXDIS MILADDEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 1799 ACTION STATE MAR 5

QUOTE

S E C R E T ATHENS 1799

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, GR

SUBJ: US/GREEK NEGOTIATIONS - SOUDHA AB

REF: (A) STATE 046615; (B) ATHENS 1196

1. MENTION BY CALOGERAS (SEE PARA 9, REF B) OF PROBLEM
GREECE FACED IN FINDING ROOM FOR NEW AIRCRAFT AT SOUDHA
AB SEEMED TO US NEGOTIATORS TO PRESAGE DEMAND BY GOG
THAT, AS PRECONDITION FOR CONTINUED USE OF AREA NOW
UTILIZED BY US NAVY, USG FUND CONSTRUCTION AT SOUDHA AB

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 051791

OF FACILITIES TO SUPPORT THIRD SQUADRON OF A-7 AIRCRAFT.

(ONLY TWO SQUADRONS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN EXISTING FACILITIES). THIS IMPRESSION WAS REINFORCED BY COMMENTS MADE EARLIER BY BG KOURIS, HAF DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND MEMBER OF GOG NEGOTIATING TEAM, AT FEBRUARY 10 SOCIAL FUNCTION HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR, IN DISCUSSION OF NEW AIRCRAFT ORDERED BY HAF, KOURIS INDICATED THAT TWO SQUADRONS OF A-7'S WERE TO BE BASED AT SOUDHA AB AND THAT HAF WAS WORKING ON PUTTING THIRD SQUADRON THERE AS WELL.

2. HAF ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASIONS IN ANOTHER NEGOTIATING CONTEXT (I.E. HOMEPORTING) SOUGHT TO INTRODUCE US FUNDING OF CONSTRUCTION ON HAF BASES AS A PREREQUISITE TO CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS. RUNWAY RESURFACING AT SOUDHA AB AND AT ELEFSIS AB WERE CLAIMED BY HAF TO BE ESSENTIAL IF US AIRCRAFT WITH HIGH LCN'S WERE TO USE BASES. IN ADDITION, HAF SOUGHT TO HAVE US NAVY CONSTRUCT ON OTHER SIDE OF ELEFSIS AB SUBSTITUTE STRUCTURES FOR THOSE SLATED FOR USE BY US NAVY IN NEVER-REALIZED PLAN TO UTILIZE ULEFSIS AB AS MAINTENANCE INTERFACE FOR CARRIER AIR WING TO BE HOMEPORTED WITH PARENT CARRIER IN GREATER ATHENS AREA. ALTHOUGH HAF EFFORT IN SOUDHA AB NEGOTIATIONS WAS BROUGHT DOWN TO ACCEPTABLE WORDING, SOUDHA AB NEGOTIATION HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED, AND ELEFSIS AB NEGOTIATION HAD BARELY BEEN INITIATED WHEN EVENTS OF SUMMER 1974 INTRUDED. THUS, WE DO NOT KNOW HOW FIRM HAF NEGOTIATING POSITION WOULD HAVE PROVEN TO BE IN END. HOWEVER, THERE IS REASON TO THINK THAT HAF AT THAT TIME FELT IT COULD INDUCE USG TO GIVE THESE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IMPETUS NEEDED TO GET THEM REQUIRED PRIORITY IN NATO INFRASTRUCTURE BARGAINING PROCESS. IT IS DIFFICULT AT THIS TIME TO ESTIMATE WITH ANY CONFIDENCE WHAT GREECE'S PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUING TO RECEIVE SUBSTANTIAL NATO INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS MIGHT BE, BUT THE DIMMER SUCH PROSPECTS APPEAR THE FIRMER WE CAN ANTICIPATE THE HAF, AND HENCE GOG, POSITION WILL BE THAT THE USG SHOULD PICK UP THE CONSTRUCTION TAB AT SOUDHA AB.

3. IN MAKING A HIGHLY TENTATIVE ESTIMATE OF COSTS NEW CONSTRUCTION MIGHT ENTAIL, WE ARE ASSUMING THAT HAF WOULD, IN FACT, DEMAND ESSENTIALLY A REPLICATION OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 051791

BASIC ELEMENTS OF FACILITY NOW UTILIZED BY US NAVY DETACHMENT AT SOUDHA AB. THIS WOULD INCLUDE TAXI LOOP, HARDSTANDS, HANGER, OTHER AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE ACILITIES, AND EXTENSION OF UTILITIES TO AN AREA BETWEEN US NAVY DETACHMENT AND OLYMPIC TERMINAL ON NORTH SIDE OF SOUDHA AB. WE HAVE DISREGARDED PERSONNEL SUPPORT FACILITIES, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAF MIGHT SEEK IN THIS REGARD. WITH THESE ASSUMPTIONS, WE BELIEVE COSTS WOULD

BE IN RANGE OF \$8 MILLION TO \$10 MILLION. ALTERNATIVELY, IT MIGHT BE DEEMED PREFERABLE TO TURN OVER EXISTING FACILITIES TO HAF AND TO BUILD AUSTERE FACILITY FOR US NAVY USE. HOWEVER, IT SEEMED TO US THAT NEED TO PROVIDE PERSONNEL SUPPORT FACILITIES AS WELL AS WORKING AREA, RAMPS, ETC. MIGHT MAKE THIS CONSIDERABLY MORE EXPENSIVE.

4. HAF HAD BEEN PLANNING TO BASE THIRD A-7 SQUADRON AT LARISSA AB. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS WOULD REQUIRE HAF TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL AGE AT COST OF APPROXIMATELY \$12 MILLION AS WELL AS TO CONSTRUCT SPECIALIZED SUPPORT FACILITIES AT UNKNOWN COST. THUS, FROM HAF POINT OF VIEW EITHER OCCUPYING AREA CURRENTLY UTILIZED BY US NAVY AT SOUDHA AB OR CAUSING US NAVY TO BUILD EQUIVALENT FACILITY WOULD SAVE NOT ONLY CONSTRUCTION COST BUT \$12 MILLION WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE TO BE EXPENDED FOR AGE. KUBISCH UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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